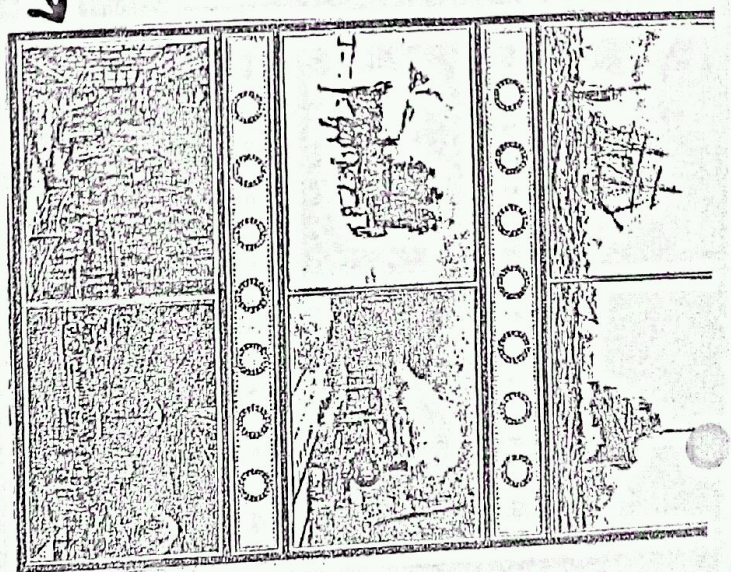
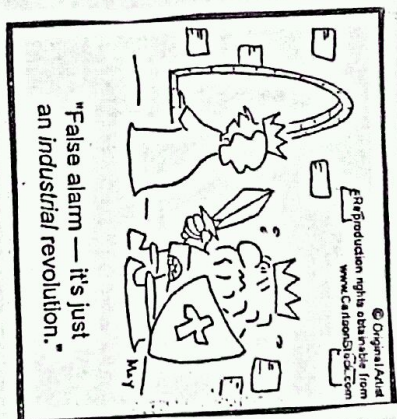


# Why Britain Led the Industrial Revolution

## Read:

- **Geography** Britain emerged as the clear front runner in the Industrial Revolution. Britain's lead was not coincidental; the country possessed several advantages that facilitated early industrialization. The first was geography. The damp climate in Britain was good for textile production, because it helped to keep the fibers in the material soft and easy to work with. Available natural resources of coal and iron fueled new machines. Separated from the continent, Britain was able to remain apart from the wars plaguing the continent during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and thus conserve resources.
- **Government** Britain also had the advantage of an absence of internal trade barriers. In England, much earlier than in continental countries such as Germany, Italy, France, and Spain, the country was unified with respect to customs. This encouraged internal British trade and circulation of goods and helped to strengthen Britain's domestic economy. Similarly, industrialization was encouraged by the ability of the population to relocate relatively freely. Unlike in France, where it was difficult for people to transfer citizenship from one French town to another, England allowed its population geographical mobility. Travel and trade were also made easier by the early development of canals and rivers. Both private and government sectors contributed to these transportation improvements.
- **Social Factors** Social factors were also significant. British society tended to be organized in a manner less rigid and hierarchical than was common in France and Germany. Relative to European norms at this time, British society was fairly egalitarian. The most significant social groupings were occupational ones, such as merchants and artisans, as opposed to the traditional class groupings of nobility, aristocracy, and peasantry.
- **The British also took advantage of their access to international markets.** A British law requiring merchants to use British ships for foreign trade promoted the British fleet. The heavy use of the fleet for trade increased the volume of imports and exports, which in turn gave Britain more purchasing power and increased the importance of the fleet, creating a self-perpetuating cycle.
- **Colonial Empire** Britain's colonial empire greatly encouraged British industrialization. Because Britain had a lot of control over its colonies, it created and enforced the economic system of mercantilism. Britain purchased and imported raw materials from her colonies. From these raw materials, British companies produced manufactured goods, which were then sold back to the colonies as well as to the Continent. British-controlled colonies provided a ready-made, steady market for British goods. The war-torn European continent also imported many finished products from Britain, increasing demand on British industries and thus pushing industries to produce more.
- **Advantages of Industrializing First** Growth of early British factories was impressive. As early as 1820, only 30 percent of British labor remained in agriculture, while at the same time between 80 and 100 percent of continental labor was still devoted to agriculture. Because so much of continental labor was engaged in agriculture, Britain was able to specialize in industry and import agricultural products from the Continent. Britain was aware of the advantage of being the first industrial nation and tried to preserve the British monopoly on industrial technology. The British government prohibited industrial workers, inventors, or anyone familiar with industrial technology to leave the country.



○ In this transparency we see an English lithograph, *The Triumph of Steam and Electricity*, commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria and celebrating the accomplishments of the Industrial Revolution in England. The panels show the improvement of the steam boat over the sailboat, the train over the horse and carriage, and electric over gas lighting.

- The Continent was still trying to restore order after the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, and the result was that the Industrial Revolution did not spread to the Continent until nearly a century later. The French only began industrializing in the period 1830–1871, with a focus on luxury items and small-scale manufacturing. Agriculture, however, remained the basis of the French economy. German industrialization took place even later, toward the latter part of the nineteenth century. The formation of the Zollverein, a German customs union, in 1819 and the unification of German states into the German Empire in 1871 created a more stable basis for an industrial economy. Other European countries—for instance, Holland, Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland—were even later to industrialize. Spain and Portugal were largely removed from the industrialization process.



# Britain & the Industrial Rev

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL	POLITICAL	ECONOMIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Relationships</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Religion</li> <li>• Hobbies</li> <li>• Sports</li> <li>• Job</li> <li>• Culture</li> </ul> <p>Examples from the reading:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government</li> <li>• Laws</li> <li>• Rules</li> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Power</li> <li>• Treaties/Alliances</li> <li>• War</li> <li>• Leaders/rulers</li> <li>• Voting</li> <li>• Political parties</li> <li>• Protests</li> </ul> <p>Examples from the reading:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work/jobs</li> <li>• Money/currency</li> <li>• Recession, depression</li> <li>• Growth</li> <li>• Taxes</li> <li>• Trade</li> <li>• Banks</li> <li>• Businesses</li> <li>• Goods and services</li> <li>• Profit and loss</li> <li>• Loans</li> <li>• Production</li> </ul> <p>Examples from the reading:</p>

Expectations = 3 examples (S, P, or E) from each paragraph of the reading. = Total of 18